NEWBERG, Ore. – Registered nurses (RNs) at Providence Newberg Medical Center overwhelmingly voted to approve a first contract that gives nurses a greater say in patients’ health care and increases workplace protections and compensation, the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) announced today.

ONA represents 140 RNs at Providence Newberg Medical Center and more than 13,000 RNs statewide; including nurses at all eight Providence acute care facilities in Oregon.

“This is a historic agreement for our community. Nurses fought to make sure our neighbors can continue counting on us to provide the high-quality care they deserve.” said Valerie Whitmore, a nurse leader who has worked at Providence Newberg Medical Center for 13 years. “This agreement helps us retain the experienced staff our community relies on and gives nurses a voice in the decisions that impact our patients’ care.”

Nurses at Providence Newberg Medical Center chose to organize and affiliate with ONA in 2015 to increase their ability to improve their patients’ care and ensure all nurses are treated fairly. The new two-year contract agreement fulfills nurses’ goals and establishes a local task force to address patient care issues and hospital working conditions, equalizes wages for nurses with similar education and work experience, and establishes basic workplace protections.

“From the beginning, we’ve been working to build a culture that puts patients first and ensures all staff are treated with dignity and respect,” said Denise O’Connell, an intensive care nurse at
Providence Newberg Medical Center. “I’m proud to see nurses take the lead to advocate for our patients and their families and raise workplace standards for everyone in our community.”

Additional highlights of the agreement:

- Establishes a local task force to improve patient care and working conditions
- Increases the community’s ability to retain experienced nurses by closing Providence Newberg Medical Center’s wage gap
- Recognizes and rewards nurses who earn national certifications in a health care specialty

The agreement also includes 2.5 percent wage increases for all nurses in 2017 and 2018 and variable increases for most nurses upon contract ratification to ensure fair compensation based on nurses’ service and qualifications.

Nurses began bargaining with the hospital in October 2015. Nurses and ONA staff donated more than 550 hours of work to reach a fair first contract agreement. The contract is effective immediately and runs through April 30, 2018.

ONA was founded in 1904 as the professional association for nurses in Oregon. It is a nonprofit association and labor union representing registered nurses. Its mission is to advocate for nursing, quality health care and healthy communities.

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